

43rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT • ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS CHAIR

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Jorgensen Makes State's Economy His Top Priority, Reintroducing the Made in America Act

MADISON – State Representative Andy Jorgensen (D-Milton) today circulated the Made in America Act, his first legislative proposal of the 2014-2015 cycle, asking his colleagues to join him in making Wisconsin's economy their top priority.

"When Wisconsin businesses and Wisconsin workers struggle, we all struggle." said Jorgensen. "Our state must be smart about how – and where – it spends money, and ensure that each and every dollar strengthens our economy, creating greater opportunity for all."

Jorgensen's proposal, co-authored by Rep. Robb Kahl of Monona and Sens. Dave Hansen of Green Bay and Julie Lassa of Stevens Point, requires Wisconsin to buy American-made materials, like steel, for its infrastructure projects. It builds on a law which already prohibits the state from spending tax dollars on services overseas. It's also a response to the disturbing new trend of states purchasing prefabricated bridges and building materials from China.

Jorgensen notes that California recently chose a Chinese manufacturer to build and deliver new parts for the San Francisco Bay Bridge. Bridges in Alaska and New York have also been "Made in China." Those states have cited financial advantages to their decisions, which may be no wonder, given that the typical Chinese manufacturing worker makes just \$12 for a 16-hour workday.

"Choosing Chinese products for infrastructure improvements may be cheaper in the short term, but make no mistake, it will cost us. In the last ten years, Wisconsin has lost 70,000 jobs to China," said Jorgensen. "It's critical we act now protect the thousands of family-supporting jobs that still exist in ironworking and construction in Wisconsin."

Jorgensen notes he first introduced the Made in America legislation two years ago. Unfortunately, Republican leaders refused to schedule even a public hearing on the bill in committee, and no Republican members signed on in support.

"We have to stop seeing bills as Republican bills or Democratic bills. The question every lawmaker should ask, when considering a proposal, is whether it's good for Wisconsin," said Jorgensen. "Common sense, not politics, should guide our work in the State Capitol."

In the 2014-15 session, Jorgensen will also focus on economic issues in his work as ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on Small Business Development.

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